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Of the three interpersonal needs measured by Schutz's FIRO-B Scale (expressed and wanted inclusion, control, and affection), it is hypothesized that (1) control will be the most salient need perceived in subordinates by immediate supervisors, and (2) the immediate superior of a given subordinate will be more likely to evidence a control orientation toward that subordinate than will a superior further removed hierarchically. To test the hypotheses, 29 elementary and secondary principals and 15 central office administrative and supervisory personnel of a West Virginia school district were asked to predict the FIRO-B response of one randomly selected teacher from each principal's building. Each teacher was also asked to predict the FIRO-B responses of his or her principal, each principal having been asked to respond personally to FIRO-B. The accuracy of each principal's prediction for his or her respective teacher was then compared with the accuracy of that teacher's prediction for the principal. Data were collected in interviews. The only significant results were that principals were more likely to be accurate than teachers on expressed control and wanted control. The hierarchical immediacy hypothesis was rejected. (HW)

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A TEST OF A CONFLICT THEORY OF ORGANIZATION*

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Conflict theories of organization at very least imply potential exploitation of the individual by the formal organization. Argyris, for example, has proposed that "there is a lack of congruency between the needs of healthy individuals and the demands of the formal organization."[1] While proposing generally that the individual may be victimized, however, few such theories have addressed themselves to specific formulations of the phenomenon.

Previous incidental findings of the present author[2] have provided grounds for speculating that the hierarchical immediacy of organizational position may impose certain constraints on superiors' perceptions of the interpersonal needs of subordinates. A study was devised subsequently with the aim of making a direct test of the veridicality of the hypotheses generated by the incidental findings.

This paper reports the results of the empirical test of those hypotheses. The hypotheses focus on one of the explicit ways the school as an organization may be exploitive of the individual --- exploitive in the sense that only certain of the individual's interpersonal needs may be salient or, indeed, relevant to certain elements of the hierarchically contrived authority system.

Hypotheses

Hypothesizing that, of the three interpersonal needs measured by Schutz's FIRO-B Scale[3] --- expressed and wanted inclusion, control, and affection, (1) control will be the most salient need perceived in subordinates by immediate superiors and that (2) the immediate superior of a given subordinate will be more likely to evi-

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dence a control orientation toward that subordinate than will a superior further removed hierarchically (control orientation is operationally defined as the degree of accuracy achieved in predicting the FIRO-B control needs of another), 29 elementary and secondary school principals and 15 central office administrative and supervisory personnel of a large West Virginia school district were asked to predict the FIRO-B response of one randomly selected teacher from each principal's building. (Although data were actually obtained from 29 principals and 29 teachers, data from one pair were not included in the final statistical analysis because of doubtful validity).

In addition, each teacher was asked to predict the FIRO-B responses of his or her respective principal, each principal having been asked to respond personally to FIRO-B. In this manner data were obtained which enabled the investigator to compare the accuracy of each principal's prediction for his or her respective teacher with the accuracy of that teacher's prediction for the principal.

While each principal was asked to predict the FIRO-B response of only one teacher, most of the central office administrative and supervisory personnel were asked to predict the FIRO-B responses of two teachers because of the fewer number of central office staff.

Procedures

Data were collected in private interviews with subjects. In the case of the building principals, each subject was asked (1) to respond to FIRO-B in such a manner as to realistically portray himself or herself; (2) to react to FIRO-B as he or she thought his or her randomly selected teacher had portrayed himself or herself; (3) to respond to the power and "toughness" subscale of the F Scale;[4] and (4) to answer questions concerning (a) the length of time the principal and teacher had been acquainted, (b) the length of time the principal had been an incumbent of the principal role, (c) the number of outside-school social contacts between principal

and teacher per month, (d) the length of time the subject had been principal of his particular building, and (e) the principal's age.

In the case of the randomly selected teacher from each principal's building, each subject was asked (1) to respond to FIRO-B in such a manner as to realistically portray himself or herself; (2) to react to FIRO-B as he or she thought his or her building principal had portrayed himself or herself; and (3) to answer questions concerning (a) the length of time the teacher and principal had been acquainted, (b) the number of outside-school social contacts between the teacher and principal per month, and (c) the teacher's age.

Each member of the central office administrative and supervisory staff was asked to react to FIRO-B as he or she thought the assigned teacher had portrayed himself or herself. As indicated earlier, most of the central staff members were assigned two teachers to predict. (Central office staff members had been asked to select those teachers with whom they considered themselves fairly well acquainted; they were then randomly assigned one or, in most cases, two of these selected teachers.)

Findings

Chi-square analyses of the comparative accuracies of principals' and teachers' FIRO-B predictions of each other, using an arbitrary dichotomy of 0 to 1 point missed versus 2 or more points missed, indicate that there are no significant or nearly significant differences <u>except</u> on the dimensions of <u>expressed control</u> ($X^2=7.18$, $p<.01$, df=1) and <u>wanted control</u> ($X^2=2.62$, $p<.15$, df=1). (See Table 1.) Principals, in both instances, were more likely to be accurate than teachers on these two dimensions, although the level of significance on wanted control is somewhat less than the .05 level usually prescribed.[5]

A similar comparison was made of the accuracies of central office staff with those of the principals. In no instance were significant differences found, however. Principals were no more likely to be accurate in predicting the FIRO-B needs of the

Table 1. Comparison of accuracy scores for principals and teachers on FIRO-B expressed and wanted inclusion, control, and affection.

FIRO-B accuracy scores	Principals N	Teachers N	Chi square (df = 1)
Expressed inclusion			
0 - 1	13	11	.20
2 - 9	15	17	$p < .70$
Wanted inclusion			
0 - 1	10	13	.66
2 - 9	18	15	$p < .50$
Expressed control			
0 - 1	20	10	7.18
2 - 9	8	18	$p < .01$
Wanted control			
0 - 1	15	9	2.62
2 - 9	13	19	$p < .15$
Expressed affection			
0 - 1	8	11	.71
2 - 9	20	17	$p < .50$
Wanted affection			
0 - 1	7	5	.42
2 - 9	21	23	$p < .60$

teachers than were the central office staff members.

An assessment of some of the extraneous variables' relationships with accuracy of the principals' in predicting the teachers' FIRO-B responses reveals that (1) as principal-teacher length of time of acquaintanceship increases, the principals' accuracy on all FIRO-B dimensions decreases; (2) principals who earned high scores on the F-Scale "toughness" subscale tended to be significantly more accurate on the teachers' FIRO-B expressed affection dimension; and (3) older principals (up to age 50) tended to be more accurate on all dimensions of FIRO-B. (Sex differences likely introduced considerable confounding, also. Most of the principals in the study were men, while most of the teachers were women).

Reproducibility coefficients for FIRO-B ranged from a low of .889 on the expressed inclusion dimension to a high of .938 on the wanted control dimension. Scalability coefficients ranged from a low of .459 on the wanted inclusion dimension to a high of .717 on the wanted affection dimension. Jackson's Plus Percentage Ratio[6] ranged from a low of .670 on expressed control to a high of .862 on wanted affection.

Implications

While findings of the present study do not sustain the hierarchical immediacy hypothesis, the data might be interpreted as indicating a control orientation or sensitivity toward the FIRO-B interpersonal control needs of subordinates by organizational superiors. This replicates incidental findings from another study reported earlier by this writer.[7]

It is recognized that the "convenience" case-study approach of the present research rendered it vulnerable to a multitude of possible confoundments. In research of more rigorous design, the hierarchical immediacy hypothesis would have been subjected to a more equitable test. As Weick and Scott have pointed out, close inspection of the research literature of organizations reveals the great preponderance of it to consist of field studies.[8] While it must be admitted that certain research

topics do not lend themselves readily to the experimental control and manipulative possibilities of the laboratory, such an approach would seem quite appropriate in the case of the present research.

Finally, while the present study can be criticized for its initial naive use of the response-predicting technique, recent efforts of the researcher have been directed toward analyses of projection tendencies and response sets of subjects.[9] Results of these analyses were not yet available at this writing, but will soon be forthcoming.

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2. See, for example, Robert B. Brumbaugh, "Accuracy of Interpersonal Perception: A Function of Superordinate Role," a paper presented to the American Educational Research Association Division A, Administration, at the annual meeting in New York City, February 16, 1967; "Interpersonal Perception in the Educational Organization Need for the Guidance Function," in C. E. Smith and O. G. Mink (eds.) Readings in the Foundations and Services of Guidance (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott, 1969) and "Hierarchical Role Immediacy and Superordinate Control Orientation: Notes toward a Theory," Journal of Educational Administration (in press).

3. William C. Schutz, FIRO: A Three-Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (New York: Rinehart, 1958).

4. T. W. Adorno, Else Frenkel Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, The Authoritarian Personality (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), p. 256.

5. See, for example, Hans L. Zetterberg, On Theory and Verification in Sociology (Totowa, N.J.: The Bedminster Press, 1965), pp. 104-111, and Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), pp. 154-155.

6. Jackson's Plus Percentage Ratio is designed to circumvent certain drawbacks of Guttman's reproducibility index. Jackson tentatively suggests 70 percent as an acceptable level. See Douglas N. Jackson and Samuel Messick (eds.), Problems in Human Assessment (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), pp. 246-247.

7. Brumbaugh, op. cit.

8. Karl E. Weick, "Laboratory Experimentation with Organizations," p. 194, and W. Richard Scott, "Field Methods in the Study of Organizations," p. 261, in James G. March (ed.), Handbook of Organizations (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965).

9. For discussions of some shortcomings of this research approach, see Roger Brown, Social Psychology (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 638-643, and Lee J. Cronbach, "Proposals Leading to Analytic Treatment of Social Perception Scores," in Renato Tagiuri and Luigi Petrullo (eds.) , Person Perception and Interpersonal Behavior (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), pp. 353-379.